AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1. (Currently Amended) An equipment management system having an equipment management apparatus for monitoring equipment and a management center for exchanging communications with the equipment management apparatus, wherein the conditions of the equipment are controlled by a combination of the equipment management apparatus and the management center, the system comprising:

a transmitter for transmitting command data together with a piece of information about transmission order of the data from the management center to the equipment management apparatus or vice versa;

a comparator for, when [[a]] current command data is received, comparing first information about transmission order assigned to the current command data with second information which is the latest information about transmission order assigned to ~~one of~~ previous command data;

a controller for performing an action of management according to the current command data when the first information about the transmission order is later than the second information[[;]], and for discarding the current command data when the first information about the transmission order is not later than the second information.

2. (Currently Amended) An equipment management system according to claim 1, wherein the command data are classified into plural types, and the second information is

the latest information about the transmission order assigned to ~~one of the~~ previous command data of the same type as ~~of~~ the current command data.

3. (Original) An equipment management system according to claim 1, wherein when the current command data is discarded, the discarding is informed from the equipment management apparatus to the management center or vice versa.

4. (Original) An equipment management system according to claim 1, wherein the equipment to be monitored by the equipment management apparatus is an image generating apparatus, and the command data received from the management center includes at least one selected from a group of the date of the next routine transmission, the next closing date, and action commands.

5. (Original) An equipment management system according to claim 1, wherein the equipment management apparatus and the management center exchange communications with each other in a form of electronic mails.

6. (Original) An equipment management system according to claim 1, wherein the information about the transmission order assigned to the command data is the date and time of transmission.

7. (Currently Amended) An equipment management system according to claim 1, wherein the information about the transmission order assigned to the command data is ~~the serial~~ sequence numbers determined by the transmission order.

8. (Currently Amended) An equipment management method using an equipment management apparatus for monitoring equipment and a management center for exchanging communications with the equipment management apparatus, wherein the conditions of the equipment are controlled by a combination of the equipment management apparatus and the management center, the method comprising steps of:

transmitting command data together with a piece of information about transmission order of the data from the management center to the equipment management apparatus or vice versa;

when [[a]] current command data is received, comparing ~~the~~ first information about the transmission order assigned to the current command data with ~~the~~ second information which is the latest information about transmission order assigned to ~~one of the~~ previous command data;

performing an action of management according to the current command data when the first information about the transmission order is later than the second information; and

discarding the current command data when the first information about the order of transmission is not later than the second information.

9. (Currently Amended) An equipment management method according to claim 8, wherein the command data are classified into plural types, and the second information is the latest information about the transmission order assigned to ~~one of the~~ previous command data of the same type as ~~of~~ the current command data.

10. (Original) An equipment management method according to claim 8, wherein when the current command data is discarded, the discarding is informed from the equipment management apparatus to the management center or vice versa.

11. (Original) An equipment management method according to claim 8, wherein the equipment to be monitored by the equipment management apparatus is an image generating apparatus, and the command data received from the management center includes at least one selected from a group of the date of the next routine transmission, the next closing date, and action commands.

12. (Original) An equipment management method according to claim 8, wherein the equipment management apparatus and the management center exchange communications with each other in a form of electronic mails.

13. (Original) An equipment management method according to claim 8, wherein the information about transmission order assigned to the command data is the date and time of transmission.

14. (Currently Amended) An equipment management method according to claim 8, wherein the information about transmission order assigned to the command data is ~~the serial~~ sequence numbers determined by the transmission order.

15. (Currently Amended) An equipment management apparatus for monitoring an equipment and controlling the conditions of the equipment according to [[a]] command data received from a management center, the apparatus comprising:

a memory for storing information about transmission order assigned to [[a]] received command data ~~received~~;

a comparator for, when [[a]] current command data is received, comparing first information about transmission order assigned to the current command data with second information which is the latest information about transmission order assigned to ~~one of~~ previous command data stored in the memory; and

a controller for performing an action of management according to the current command data when the first information about the order of transmission is later than the second information, and discarding the current command data when the first information about the order of transmission is not later than the second information.

16. (Currently Amended) An equipment management apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the command data are classified into plural types, and the second information is the latest information about the transmission order assigned to ~~one of the~~ previous command data of the same type as ~~of~~ the current command data.

17. (Currently Amended) An equipment management apparatus according to claim 15, further comprising a cancel-informing means for, when the current command data is discarded, informing the management center of the discarding.

18. (Original) An equipment management apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the equipment to be monitored by the equipment management apparatus is an image generating apparatus, and the command data received from the management center includes at least one selected from a group of the date of the next routine transmission, the next closing date, and action commands.

19. (Original) An equipment management apparatus according to claim 15, wherein its communication with the management center is made by exchanging electronic mails.

20. (Original) An equipment management apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the information about the transmission order assigned to the command data is the date and time of transmission.

21. (Currently Amended) An equipment management apparatus according to claim 15, wherein the information about the transmission order assigned to the command data is ~~the serial~~ sequence numbers determined by the order of transmission.

22. (Currently Amended) An equipment management method for monitoring equipment and controlling the conditions of the equipment according to [[a]] command data received from a management center, comprising the steps of:

storing [[an]] information about transmission order assigned to [[a]] received command data ~~received~~;

when [[a]] current command data is received, comparing first information about order of transmission assigned to the current command data with second information which

is the latest information about transmission order assigned to ~~one of~~ previous command data; and

performing an action of management according to the current command data when the first information about the transmission order is later than the second information[[;]], and discarding the current command data when the first information about the transmission order is not later than the second information.

23. (Currently Amended) A program product for an equipment management apparatus which monitors equipment and controls the conditions of the equipment according to [[a]] command data received from a management center, the program product enabling the equipment management apparatus to:

store [[an]] information about transmission order assigned to [[a]] command data received;

compare first information about transmission order assigned to [[a]] current command data with second information which is the latest information about transmission order assigned to ~~one of~~ previous command data when the current command data is received; and

perform an action of management according to the current command data when the first information about the transmission order is later than the second information[[;]], and discard the current command data when the first information about the transmission order is not later than the second information.